

How I Learned About God in Spite of Alcoholics Anonymous

An article by Mr. X

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Hi, I'm Mr. X and I *used to be* an alcoholic and a drug addict.

Yeah that's right. Not I **'AM'** an alcoholic and an addict, no I **'USED'** to be one. I am not recovering, I am not recovered, I have been healed and delivered of this problem. Doesn't that just fly in the face of that old tired mantra you heard at the A.A. or NARC-ANON meetings? Am I deceived? Delusional? Not really an alcoholic of "the hopeless variety?" If you will indulge me the time to read this article, I'll let You be the judge.

Who am I?

Just an average Joe. I used to think I was pretty special. Now I am content to realize that in spite of my arrogance and inflated ego, I am just another average person who needed help from something bigger than myself.

As a kid, I never thought I would touch booze or drugs. Mom and Dad didn't drink. Dad might have a beer with a pizza or Mexican food, but that's the only time I ever saw either one of them take a drink. I had a grandfather that drank a lot after work. He would get verbally abusive as well as socially offensive when he drank. **I told myself that I would never be like that.** I was good. I went to church every Sunday. I even sang in the choir and played the piano in Sunday School. I made good grades. I was an inquisitive child and got into the normal sort of troubles as do most kids, but I was basically OK.

Socially, I was never comfortable around the popular kids at school. Some of them tried to involve me, but I just didn't feel like I fit in. I thought maybe I could fit in with the rowdy bunch instead. So to prove myself one of them, I learned to smoke cigarettes. I tried pot once in 8th grade, but I couldn't tell that it did anything, so I left it alone at that time. Like most people, I was just lonely inside and wanted to be loved and accepted and have peace of mind. I didn't know how to accomplish this.

First Contact

At one point, some of my friends got into Jesus. We started going to this little nondenominational youth meeting on Saturday nights when I was about 14. That was during the Jesus People movement of the 1970's. I thought I finally found a place to fit in. They were nice to everybody who came.

As I got a little older, I did very well in high school band and choir. I played the piano very well and even went to some regional competitions where I did fairly well. I thought this would make the other kids like me and respect me. Kids being kids, it made them a little jealous and somewhat suspicious of me because I was different.

When I would spend my weekend time with friends, I noticed that they 'seemed' happier when they started drinking beer and smoking pot. I wanted to be like them so I would fit in and not seem so different. I was so desperate to make sure that they liked me that I joined in with them, against my better judgment. I got one of them to teach me how to drink and smoke pot. By the end of my last year in high school, I was smoking pot every night and drinking every weekend. It made me feel pretty good and it gave me the illusion that my friends liked me more when I had a buzz. Unfortunately, a girl who I started dating didn't like it. Her dad was an alcoholic and once she saw that I was going to be a drunk just like him, she dropped me. So much for love and acceptance, right?

College Blues

When I went off to college I started off very well. I went there to major in music and with the help of my professors I did pretty good academically. I had the respect and acceptance of my peers, too, but I thought I would be a bigger hit if I was thought of as a wild crazy artist. I ended up spending all my spare time and money on pot. I drank a lot, too. I managed to keep up with my school work for a couple of years. Eventually, the wild life took its toll. As I became chronically messed up, I couldn't keep it with all the responsibilities that had come my way and I lost most of them, along with the respect I had craved from faculty and friends.

Thinking I was partying so hard because I was unhappy with myself, I checked myself into a rehab center. For those not in the know, that's a politically correct term for a mental hospital. After getting out, I seemed like I was doing pretty good. I was able to stay off drugs and booze for a couple of months. I even went to A.A. (Alcoholics Anonymous) for a little while during this time. But it didn't last.

I found my excuse to go back to partying. I learned that one of the drugs that a psychiatrist had prescribed to me for depression, thiorazine, was in fact a strong psychotic drug. I was unaware of what it was when he prescribed it. I was mad at him and felt betrayed. I thought he understood that I was trying to stay away from drugs. In my anger, I reasoned that if I had to be on drugs, I would get my own. I went back to pot and booze.

Graduation to Doom

Eventually it was clear to me and my teachers that I couldn't keep up with a life of being messed up and going to school. I tried joining a band. After all, rock and roll stars were supposed to be wild party people. After about four years of this life, I was terribly gone.

I never became a star in music, but I became a textbook case of an alcoholic and drug abuser. Near the end of my wild days, I had met and started living with a woman I thought I was in love with. When I was a kid, I judged my grandfather for being abusive and offensive when he drank. **Well, I had become exactly like the person I had judged so harshly.** One night I when I was very drunk, I was verbally abusive to her. She got pretty mad at me and told me that she was done with me.

Believe it or not, she scared me. I was very frightened of being alone. I was so desperate for her to stay with me. I was willing to do anything to prove to her that I was worth a second chance. So, I promised her I would do what ever I possibly could to straighten up and that I would start going to A.A. meetings.

A New Start

On New Years' Day of 1988, I walked into a local A.A. meeting. I don't even remember what the guy who was talking that night had to say. I just knew that I had to stand up and tell everyone I was wrecked and that I was making a choice to get sober.

The basic message of A.A. is that I had an illness which prevented me from remembering why I shouldn't drink, and that I needed a Higher Power's help to remind before I pick one up again. In other words, a Higher Power would keep me sober when I couldn't muster the power to do so myself. I just had to commit to going to A.A. meetings, not drinking or doing drugs, and to find some way to stay accountable with others who were like myself and could see through any attempts I might make to fool myself into drinking or drugging again.

I'll have to admit that I didn't find any real answers in A.A. at first. I met a fellow who tried to help me understand A.A., but in retrospect, I am not sure he really understood it himself. He had been sober for some time, but he was never really taught the program clearly outline in the A.A. Big Book. He was kind of like a Christian who has gone to church and believed that they had been be saved for many years, but they never really were taught the Bible or took the time to read it for themselves. As a result, he just kind

of lived and figured out what they thought he ought to do on the fly. **He was typical of 99% of the folks I knew in A.A.**

After about six months of wondering what A.A. was really all about, I ran into a group of people who followed the A.A. program 'by the book.' They believed that the A.A. 'Big Book' is really a text book that explains the A.A. program clearly and that you didn't have to wing it on your own. In fact they said you were more likely to go back out and start drinking or doping if you failed to follow the instructions in that book. They opened up this text book and explained the A.A. program to me. By the end of a long weekend, I finally understood, so I thought, what my problem was and how to get by without getting messed up forever!

Career Change

During my time in A.A., I left the music scene and got into computer work. I found that I was pretty good at it and moved up in the ranks at my new job. I was making more money than I ever thought possible and was able to support myself with good food and clothes and a nice place to live for the first time in my life. I actually liked this work better than playing music.

With my new found success, I started exploring the world. I found that I was more attractive to women since I had the confidence of being well employed and taking better care of myself. I thought that my lifelong goal of being loved and accepted and having peace of mind was just around the corner.

Unfortunately, I soon found out that I was looking for women to make me feel good about myself. I would meet a woman that I liked a lot and get real serious about a long term relationship. But they seemed to sense that something was wrong and each one sooner or later dumped me. I must have been a real pain to make them do that, but at the time, it really hurt me and I felt very lost inside. I just didn't know what to do.

An Invitation

A friend of mine suggested that I visit a church she was going to where they taught straight out of the Bible and tried to serve God the way the Bible recommended. I went to one of their meetings. It seemed a little too radical to me, even fanatical. These people played guitars and sang what sounded like folk songs, and they held up their hands in the air when they sang. It was different than anything I was familiar with and it went on for almost an hour!

Then the pastor got up and talked for about an hour. I wasn't used to a church meeting that lasted more than about 50 minutes. He explained the Bible very literally and that freaked me out. The church I had gone to all my life was pretty liberal and the Bible was considered a guide to be interpreted more than an accurate recording of God's word and his will for His people.

I didn't go back to that church. Instead, I started playing music at clubs at night, though I didn't drink or use drugs. I would work by day and hang out at the clubs playing music on my off nights. I eventually got into another relationship, but it soon fell apart. The woman had a daughter who didn't like me much because I made a pretty rude remark on one occasion. She forced her hand and made her mom choose between me and her. Naturally, the woman didn't want to have problems with her daughter, so it didn't work out between us. She wouldn't commit to any long term relationship.

Last Chance?

Here I was again, feeling alone and rejected. I didn't have drinking or drugs in the picture to make me forget how bad the pain hurt inside. I didn't know what to do. I considered getting drunk because I didn't know where to get any drugs anymore. But it just didn't make sense. I thought about suicide, but that didn't seem to make sense either. So I did something I hadn't really ever tried. **I prayed to God that he would tell me what to do. I told him that I would do whatever he said to do if he would just talk to me and help me find my way out of this misery I was feeling.**

I don't know how to explain this, but I thought I sensed God talking to me and telling me what to do. I didn't hear any audible voice, I just heard this voice in my head and it made sense. It said, "Go back to that little church that freaked you out. Don't worry about relationships. Just go that church." It wasn't what I was expecting to hear. In fact, I didn't really like the idea. I was pretty proud and thought it might be a little embarrassing to go to a church like that. **But, I had made a deal with God, and who was I to back out of a deal with Him.**

So, I went to the church. I didn't really relate to the people holding up their hands praising God. I didn't even really related to the sermon the pastor gave that night. I just went because I thought God told me to go there. **But by the end of the service, I felt like God touched me and really loved me. I think I was saved by Jesus that very night.**

Surprise!

Then something way beyond any experience I ever had occurred. At the end of the service, this lady walked up to me and told me she had a message for me from God. She told me some things about myself that only I and God knew. I was pretty blown away! She told me that God loved me and that I was in the right place. There was like no way she could have known these things about me unless God had really given her the information. I was pretty impressed. I learned later that she had what some people call a word of knowledge, (1 Cor. 12) where God gives a person prophetic information about a person or situation.

I stopped going to A.A., but I still thought about it a lot. After a while I got into a discussion with some of the people at that church there about my experiences in A.A. I told them a few things I believed about God based on what A.A. had taught me. They were really nice and listened to me, but then when I was done, they opened up their Bibles and showed me where the Bible and A.A. had some differing opinions on matters.

Since the Bible claims to be the inspired Word of God, I had to decide if I would believe that or not. If I did, it meant I had to reexamine some things that I had learned in A.A. that I had accepted to be true.

Let's Take a Closer Look

I looked in the Bible at the passages they were referring to and had to face the fact that A.A. might have some bugs in its "theology." You see, in the most classical sense, A.A. is a religious program. Like it or not, it says that the only help that a drunk has is to get a relationship with God. It then teaches a person how to do that. That's the same as any church would do with any human, **so it looks to me like A.A. is a religion.**

Now in one sense, A.A. is pretty accurate. God is, after all, a Higher Power. He is bigger than me. Surely he had the power to help me stay away from the drugs and booze and to resist the temptation to drink. But when one studied the A.A. program very carefully using the Bible as a guide, one found some things that are ever so subtly out of step with Christianity. I didn't know the Word of God very well when I was in A.A. I don't to this day know for sure if I was even saved at that time, even though I went to church regularly.

I need to stop make a point before I continue. I will always be thankful for the particular folks who I met in A.A.. Many of them were kind to me and very generous with their time. They befriended me and gave me all that they had to give. In fact, I had been very fortunate to run into A.A. people who believed that the A.A. program was fully explained in their main textbook, and that I didn't have to sit around for days, weeks, and years to understand that program and to reap its benefits. They opened the book up, showed me what to do, and BOOM, I suddenly understood what they were talking about. In fact, many of the folks in my A.A. group of friends claimed to be Christians.

Now that I have said that, let me go on.

The sum of what these people in this program had to give me was limited to a combination of their friendship and a supposed textbook method to find God. **It turned out to be a cleverly disguised false teaching which they had bought because it was all that they knew.** This teaching was fully contained in that textbook, and it seemed to make pretty good sense. But it was ALL that they or anyone had to give. After four years around that the program, I found out that I needed a little more than what they or A.A. had to give. What I needed was more than any human had to give. I needed JESUS! I just didn't know it yet. Nor did they.

A.A. and Christianity Just Don't Mix

You see, A.A. teaches a few things that just do not line up with God's Word. The ideas were nice and logical to the human mind, but human logic does not always line up with God's Word. I want to challenge anyone in A.A. who professes Jesus Christ to really take a look at the truth. There can only be ONE truth. Truth is truth, and what is not completely true is false.

Here's some of the things taught by A.A. and some of its members that contradict God's Word:

A.A. teaches that a person can choose whatever conception of God (a 'Higher Power') they want to believe in. They call this 'God as we understand Him.'

In other words, you get to try to figure out what god is and define him, her, or it on your own. How can a human conceive of God? Especially when they are doing all they can just to stay sober after being wet-brained or doped-up for God knows how many years? It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that this is a pretty tall order to ask of a drunk and a dope fiend. But, God love them all, here is A.A. was telling me to pick my own god!

Well, I picked one that I could understand, and in retrospect, he conceived of the universe and acted on it with mannerisms that were a lot like mine. In fact, I think it WAS me! Unfortunately, I was pretty impotent as a god maker. I couldn't make myself happy or peaceful, and eventually I considered going back to drinking or drugging as viable solutions to the heartache I felt from just plain living. In such a state, how was I supposed to come up with a conception of God that would work for me all on my own?

God knew that we would eventually have to wrestle with this concept of trying to either figure out God or making up one of our own. Look at these verses from Psalm 115, that address this very issue (Psalm 115, vs. 3-8 [NIV]):

Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him. But their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see; they have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell; they have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throats. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.

To believe that it would be even remotely possible to figure out God would be severely overrating one's self. As a human, I can only conceive of a god that will fit inside the limits of my imagination. Such as god is as limited as I am. A weak god indeed! Certainly not powerful enough to heal me of the pain that drove me to blind myself with intoxication to begin with! So I lived by my own conception of a god. For some strange reason, this god always wanted me to do what I thought was the best thing to do. Yes, I eventually concluded that I was playing god for myself.

A.A. teaches that no one who is an alcoholic could ever be cured of alcoholism.

Interesting. This would be a valid conclusion if I was being my own god or limited to natural powers. But isn't this a rather limiting statement if we are talking about a supernatural God? I mean, if God can create the heavens and the earth in six days like the bible claims, why he is suddenly so powerless to heal me of alcoholism, or anything else for that matter? Again, when we

are left to conceive of a god made in our own image, we are limited by the capacity of that gray matter between our ears. God is bigger than all of that.

The Bible tells us in 2nd Corinthians 5:17:

'Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.'

The 'old man' that I was before I was reborn a Christian was incapable of delivering himself from the pain and selfishness that drove him to drink. He didn't even want to look at the pain and own that he had brought much of it upon himself! But, the new man I am in Christ is healed of alcoholism and I am being set free from the pains and bondages that led me to play god and to appoint liquor and drugs as my solution to begin with! Alcoholism is just a symptom of a much deeper issue.

God can use A.A. as an in-between measure to open my heart to receive Jesus when the time would come.

There was this one incredibly brilliant. But it's not true. In the interest of intellectual honesty, this is not a claim of A.A., but of some of its membership and of many pastors and Christians I have know in my life.

The Bible, God's Word says that Jesus is the only way to a relationship with God. Some folks in A.A. were took another tack. This one incredibly bitter man I knew in A.A. was a former student in a Catholic seminary. Now he was simply a deist with an attitude. He would tell you to your face that he thought Jesus was a myth. He was convinced that A.A. was the new church. He used to speak the following lie of the devil with all sincerity. He said what makes up the next big myth:

'The church had its chance with alcoholics for almost 2000 years, now God made the A.A. program to help alcoholics since the church failed.'

I want to address both of these at the same time. I knew a lot ABOUT Jesus all of my life and I knew a lot ABOUT him when I was involved in A.A. But even when sober as a result of A.A., I still acted as lord of my own life in several areas.

I don't think God called me to Jesus through A.A. I think I chose A.A. A.A. is tangible and familiar, very human. God is not always so tangible to us. I think that as rigorous a program as it was, it was still easier for me to go to A.A. then to go straight to Jesus and deal with **the real problem: "ME."** A.A. focuses on alcohol. Jesus focuses in on my failings, my weaknesses, and yes, my SIN. Without Jesus I am a doomed sinner. A.A. is an easier pill to swallow then coming face to face with SELF.

You see, God never violates a person's free will. We are made in his image with the free will of choice. He doesn't force us to come to him. He may call us, **but it's always our choice as to whether or not we respond.**

My experience in A.A. taught me something valuable. **Human solutions can help me cope, but God's solutions heal me and deliver me.** At best, A.A. offers a habitual drunk a tool for 'coping' with a problem, but it cannot not offer the Living God's Divine Power that could cause a healing in my body, soul, and spirit. Only surrender to Jesus could do that because Jesus is THE way, THE truth, and THE life: no man may come unto God for grace and power without going through the saving doorway of faith in Jesus' suffering death and resurrection.

A.A. was my last serious attempt at finding peace without doing so on God's terms. I had tried all the New Age and the witchcraft occult scene. They weren't too wonderful. Sure we talked about God or about being gods a lot, but we didn't leave ourselves any room to really let God into our lives to fix us up His way. We had these nice little textbooks to limit his access into our hearts

through carefully defined procedures. I just wasn't able to see all of this until I became beaten down by my own bad choices to a point where I would really look at the Word and ask God to speak to me through it. There can be only one truth.

Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am THE way, THE truth, and THE life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. John 14:5-7

The truth was that the Holy Spirit got my attention in my hour of need and pointed me to Jesus, and Jesus made a way for me to know God, my Father!

'If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.' John 8:36

A.A. teaches: 'Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic.'

This is a contradiction of God's word and an attempt to make God's power an authority important. Therefore, like it or not, it is a lie of the devil. It doesn't matter that it was delivered by well-intentioned lips, it's still a lie and everything that is not of the Truth is a LIE! This new man in Christ could be free from the curse of alcoholism because JESUS made me free. He hung on a tree and died a terrible death to purchase my healing and deliverance.

Jesus did not die on a cross and rise again so I would have to live the rest of my life in a smoke filled room drinking coffee with other ex-drunks just to stay sober and cope. He died and rose again to save me, deliver me, and HEAL ME.

1 Peter 2:24 [NIV] says of Jesus,

'He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.'

How arrogant of me or anyone else to say that I could not be cured by Almighty God, to in effect tell Jesus that His death and resurrection was just not enough for me. When I really heard this truth and came to terms with it, it set me free from bondage to the lie of Satan that I would always have to deal with my alcoholism.

I was told that there were many ways to find God that did not necessarily have to start with or deal with Jesus Christ.

This is a lie in that Jesus, according to the Bible, is THE ONLY WAY to knowing the Father.

In Acts 4:10-12 [NIV], we are told clearly:

'...then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. He is 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.'

These friends of mine were able to show me the truth of God's Word in comparison with the errors of my thinking. They knew the scriptures and were able to use them so that the Lord could set me free from a lie: that of doubting the power of Christ as literally explained in the scriptures. Our biggest danger as Christians is that if we don't know the scriptures, we are open to believing all sorts of lies about God, ourselves, and Satan: the father of all lies.

OK, having said all that, I am about to take on some sacred cows...

Read on at your own peril. ☺

The Hard Truth about A.A. - Listen Up, Christians, and especially you Pastors!

In cold objective terms, A.A., while meaning well, is a cult that preaches a false gospel. It does not recognize Jesus as the only True Higher Power. As such, A.A. and its members are unwitting players in Satan's attempts to litter the world with false doctrines and lies about who we are and who God is.

Do you want to cope and stay sober or be healed of the problem entirely?

My friends had learned God's word and could speak the truth to me in love. I was set free from the lies and the false beliefs. If we, too, learn the scriptures, we benefit by being able to recognize the sometimes subtle darkness of deception by using the lamp of the Word to light our path and the paths of others.

A.A. told me that I could find my own god and never be healed of alcoholism. But by the power of Jesus Christ, and the faith I have in God's word, I know today that He has healed me of ever having to be a slave to alcohol or any other drug. I had to face the fact that A.A. is another religion that is just not compatible with mine, no matter how good it may look or how many people it seems to help. Sometimes what we think is good, is not God's best for us. I am grateful to God that he made sure I could experience His best for me!

I wanted to be loved and accepted and have peace of mind. No human or chemical could do that for me. I only found love, acceptance and peace of mind through being saved by my best friend, Jesus Christ.

(Note: God eventually introduced Mr. X to a lady who would become Mrs. X, who was better a better match for Mr. X than anyone he had ever attempted to find on his own.)

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